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U.S. Embassy plans include no Soviet citizens

By Rita McWilliams
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No Soviet citizens would work in the new U.S. Embassy building in Moscow, scheduled to open in 1988, under a State Department plan designed to improve security.

About 200 Soviet citizens currently work at the U.S. Embassy compound in routine maintenance jobs — they clean buildings, repair and service cars, and work as plumbers, electricians and chauffeurs. At least half of these positions would be filled by U.S. citizens with security clearances under the State Department plan.

State-supplied Soviet workers would be hired for jobs in adjacent warehouses and maintenance buildings, State Department officials said, and some might be employed at the U.S. Consulate in Leningrad.

The Soviet Union employs no U.S. citizens at its embassy here. The State Department has been under increasing congressional pressure to reduce the number of Soviet employees at its Moscow embassy because of reports of espionage, such as bugging typewriters and scattering chemical "spy dust" to monitor U.S. contacts with Soviet citizens.

The administration is planning to ask Congress for \$18 million this month to begin replacing the Soviet workers next year. Soviet workers average about \$4,000 per year, while transportation, salary, housing and

benefits for each U.S. citizen cost about \$500,000 per year, a State Department official said.

The State Department, arguing that it would not be feasible to fill all positions with U.S. citizens, successfully staved off final passage of an amendment to a foreign aid bill that would have barred employing any Soviet citizen at the Moscow and Leningrad posts after Sept. 30, 1986. The Democratic-controlled House had passed the measure on a voice vote.

Rep. James A. Courter, R-N.J., who introduced the measure, will push it again this fall. Mr. Courter "believes the Soviets employ zero Americans here in their embassy for a very sound reason — security," an aide said. "It's an elementary precaution we should have taken long ago."

But some members of Congress are opposed to an across-the-board firing of Soviet citizens at the U.S. posts. Rep. Daniel A. Mica, D-Fla., chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on International Operations, said the new pool of American workers could unknowingly be used by Soviet agents.

"If we expand the network [of Americans in the Soviet Union working in the embassy], the [U.S.] intelligence people will have worse problems," Mr. Mica said.

The State Department is considering various hiring options.

About 25 companies have submitted bids for the first contract to fill 22 maintenance positions at the Mos-

cow post, according to the office receiving the bids.

State Department officials said that some of the jobs now performed by Soviet workers would be consolidated. But just how many U.S. citizens would be employed is still uncertain.

U.S. citizens assigned to embassy jobs would have to be willing to work there for at least three years, an official said. The jobs would range from resident manager to plumbing, electrical, ventilation and heating maintenance positions.

Don Naffziger, director of business development for RCA Service Co., one of the companies bidding for the first contract, said special screening procedures would be necessary for personnel.

"We fully feel that it can be done, we've got people ready to go," Mr. Naffziger said.